

shortages, nursing shortages, physician shortages.

Hospitals have hit a crisis point. If we do not act now, a nationwide healthcare crisis will be upon us.

My mother once said: "Jim, if you don't have good health, you don't have anything." Every American deserves access to healthcare.

COVID-19 ORIGIN ACT OF 2023

Mr. TURNER. Madam Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 199, I call up the bill (S. 619) to require the Director of National Intelligence to declassify information relating to the origin of COVID-19, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 199, the bill is considered read.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 619

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "COVID-19 Origin Act of 2023".

SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) identifying the origin of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is critical for preventing a similar pandemic from occurring in the future;

(2) there is reason to believe the COVID-19 pandemic may have originated at the Wuhan Institute of Virology; and

(3) the Director of National Intelligence should declassify and make available to the public as much information as possible about the origin of COVID-19 so the United States and like-minded countries can—

(A) identify the origin of COVID-19 as expeditiously as possible, and

(B) use that information to take all appropriate measures to prevent a similar pandemic from occurring again.

SEC. 3. DECLASSIFICATION OF INFORMATION RELATED TO THE ORIGIN OF COVID-19.

Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of National Intelligence shall—

(1) declassify any and all information relating to potential links between the Wuhan Institute of Virology and the origin of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), including—

(A) activities performed by the Wuhan Institute of Virology with or on behalf of the People's Liberation Army;

(B) coronavirus research or other related activities performed at the Wuhan Institute of Virology prior to the outbreak of COVID-19; and

(C) researchers at the Wuhan Institute of Virology who fell ill in autumn 2019, including for any such researcher—

(i) the researcher's name;

(ii) the researcher's symptoms;

(iii) the date of the onset of the researcher's symptoms;

(iv) the researcher's role at the Wuhan Institute of Virology;

(v) whether the researcher was involved with or exposed to coronavirus research at the Wuhan Institute of Virology;

(vi) whether the researcher visited a hospital while they were ill; and

(vii) a description of any other actions taken by the researcher that may suggest

they were experiencing a serious illness at the time; and

(2) submit to Congress an unclassified report that contains—

(A) all of the information described under paragraph (1); and

(B) only such redactions as the Director determines necessary to protect sources and methods.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill shall be debatable for 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence or their respective designees.

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TURNER) and the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. HIMES), each will control 30 minutes.

The chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TURNER).

□ 0915

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TURNER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and insert into the RECORD extraneous material on S. 619.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of S. 619, a bill that would require the Director of National Intelligence to declassify information relating to the origin of COVID-19. The House companion bill, H.R. 1376, passed unanimously out of the Intelligence Committee.

I thank Ranking Member HIMES for his dedication to bipartisanship and professionalism as we work together to try to ensure that the Intelligence Committee responds to the needs of the House.

Madam Speaker, the COVID-19 pandemic wreaked havoc across the country, with almost every household feeling its effects. The United States death toll from this virus has surpassed 1 million people.

Although concrete data is hard to lock down, millions of Americans are suffering from the long-term effects directly attributed to this virus.

COVID-19 has also negatively affected our communities, especially our kids. It has become increasingly clear that school-age children face major educational hurdles because of distance learning and long-term school closures.

The American public deserves answers to every aspect of the COVID-19 pandemic, including how this virus was created, and specifically, whether it was a natural occurrence or was the result of a lab-related event.

The House Intelligence Committee which oversees our intelligence community is aware of classified information that could help inform the public why COVID-19 as a lab leak theory is not just a possibility but approaches the idea that it is likely.

The intelligence community does have more information about COVID-19

than the public is led to believe. Much of the information they have can be declassified and disseminated to the public. In fact, the bill we are discussing today would give the American public just a glimpse, albeit a very important aspect, of the classified information the intelligence community holds.

S. 619, if passed by the House and signed into law, would give the American public a unique insight as to what was happening at a biosafety level laboratory in Wuhan, China, in late 2019 and early 2020. This laboratory and who was working there might be the key to unraveling the truth.

For those concerned about declassifying COVID-19 origins information, I can assure you that the intelligence community could release this information while protecting their sources and methods of how it was collected. In fact, I believe that the intelligence community could go further than what is called for in S. 619 and release most of what it knows about COVID origins, but this is a good start.

COVID-19 ranks as one of this century's most important events. No community was spared, and every corner of the world felt its effects. Everyone deserves to know what our intelligence community knows, and S. 619 is the right step in the right direction.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HIMES. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of S. 619, the COVID-19 Origins Act of 2023. Along with my colleague, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TURNER), I plan to support this legislation, and I urge the House to pass it. Let me stop now to compliment Chairman TURNER on the efforts he has made narrowly to bring this bill to the floor, but more generally, to make sure that the Intelligence Committee operates in the thoughtful, constructive, and bipartisan manner which it must operate in if we are to protect this Nation's national security.

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken the lives of more than 1.1 million Americans, and millions more have died worldwide. The American people want to know as much as we can determine about where this pandemic started and critically how we can be ready for the next deadly disease, which will come.

Determining the precise origins of a pandemic disease with high confidence is challenging under the best of circumstances. In this case, our already difficult task is that much harder because COVID originated in China.

At every juncture, the PRC Government has obfuscated and obstructed legitimate inquiries and investigations into the origins of the disease. China's approach has been deeply irresponsible and dangerous to global public health.

It is against that backdrop that in 2021 President Biden ordered a 90-day sprint by the intelligence community to analyze the origins of the virus. In

August of 2021, the IC completed its initial work, and a few months later, a declassified version of its findings was made public.

In short, the intelligence community agencies could not come to an agreement on whether the virus originated from a lab accident or from natural exposure. Some individual agencies did reach a judgment—a narrow judgment—about which path was more likely, but they could not do so with high confidence simply because we don't have enough reliable information to draw those conclusions. There is a version of the IC's classified assessment that is available to all Members through the House Security Office.

Around 18 months after the completion of the IC assessment, not much has changed. The intelligence community remains focused on this question, and I hope that we will have a breakthrough that will allow us to answer these questions once and for all, but today we are not there yet.

I believe that the IC should make as much public as they can, consistent with the overriding need to protect sources and methods. Transparency is a critical element of our democracy. The factual grounding of the IC's analysis can be an antidote to the speculation, the rumor, and the theories that grow in the absence of good information.

It is important to note that the bill provides the authority to make redactions to protect sources and methods for a good reason, and neither the chairman nor I would be supporting the bill if that were not true. I trust the intelligence community and the administration will lean forward in making public as much new information as possible without endangering our ability to collect and analyze on these issues going forward.

Now, I would mention two important things before I recognize other speakers on my side:

First, the pandemic, which is really what is at stake here. Whether COVID-19 originated from a lab leak or natural transmission at a wet market, the next pandemic disease could originate from either source, and it could come from anywhere.

In 2022, the Intelligence Committee released a declassified report looking at how the intelligence community responded to COVID-19 and made recommendations for how we can be better prepared for the next pandemic disease, wherever it may come from.

Overall, the report recommended that the intelligence community increase resources for global health security and medical intelligence, and that it needs to move away from a culture that views health security as a lesser priority than so-called traditional hard national security threats; evidence the fact that it was this that killed over a million Americans.

Furthermore, we need to promote complementary efforts between the public health and intelligence commu-

nities. Public health professionals and their counterparts in the IC must work hand-in-hand if we want to maximize the odds of identifying a novel disease at the earliest possible stage and if we want to give ourselves the best chance of determining the novel disease's origins.

Let me turn briefly to another important thing that is really at stake here. Madam Speaker, democracy is rooted in the idea that the people govern, that it is their right to determine their own political destiny. With that right comes an obligation that we don't talk about or think about nearly enough, and that obligation is to be thoughtful, informed critical thinkers about the issues of the day.

That is not who we are today. Today, we have elevated—because of our political polarization, we have elevated confirmation bias to a secular religion. Even in this conversation about the origins of the coronavirus, what you believe is indicative of where you stand on the political spectrum.

For reasons I don't understand, some of our colleagues and many Americans are running around with a theory that somehow buttresses their political legitimacy. Maybe you do that with UFOs, maybe you want to believe that there are aliens at Roswell or whatever you want to believe; that is pretty harmless. But when we are talking about a pandemic or something as serious as a disease that could kill a million Americans, that is not okay, and we have to remember our obligation to be thoughtful critical thinkers. We cannot let our political hopes override the obligations we have to be thinkers.

Madam Speaker, I tell my colleagues, the chairman and I have seen all of the classified information on this, and we don't know—we don't know the origins of the COVID pandemic. Whatever is ultimately declassified, I would hope that my colleagues and the American people would approach that information with the intellectual humility that we need to approach something as serious as a pandemic and how we behave as citizens in democracy.

We don't know.

We need to think about whether we want confirmation bias. Our tendency to select just those facts which support our preexisting positions interfere with our duty as critical thinkers in a democracy.

At the end of the day, the American people will get the system of government that they deserve, and if we don't get back to being humble about what we know to being critical thinkers, our democracy will be at risk.

I close with a quote from a great Connecticut writer and humorist, Mark Twain. He said: "It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble. It is what you know for sure that just ain't so."

I am going to join my chairman in supporting this bill, and I hope it passes in overwhelming bipartisan fashion. I hope we take that informa-

tion and use it for constructive purposes in the service of saving lives and buttressing our democracy.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TURNER. Madam Speaker, I appreciate my ranking member's very thoughtful comments and remarks.

Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. GARCIA).

Mr. GARCIA of California. Madam Speaker, the issue at hand is actually a simple one: it is whether or not to declassify data pertaining to the investigations into the origins of COVID. This is a simple vote. The simplicity of this vote is in stark contrast to the magnitude of the ramifications of this declassification process.

By declassifying, we will be able to seek clarity, give transparency, and gain security, which is what the American people deserve.

By declassifying, we have a chance to ensure that the 7 million people who died of COVID are honored correctly. This is a chance to hold China accountable for COVID and seek justice and a reckoning. Perhaps most importantly, it is a chance to prevent another man-made pandemic such as this from wreaking havoc on the planet again.

I think it is shameful that some have politicized this issue. This isn't political at all. Declassifying this information is simply the right thing to do.

I have personally been cleared to handle classified information since I was 18 years old, and the point of classifying information is to protect American lives, whether it is civilians and/or military personnel.

Information that is classified is material that would cause damage, serious damage or exceptionally grave damage to national security if made publicly available.

Now, the irony of this debate, however, is that the release of this data will actually save lives and help prevent the loss of life in the future. It will enhance our security, not degrade it. The continued overclassification of this data at the highest level actually poses the greatest threat to our Nation's security.

This is an easy and simple "yes" vote. The implications of this will determine whether or not we are able to prevent such another catastrophic pandemic from paralyzing us and taking so many lives.

I encourage all Members from both sides of the aisle to vote "yes" and enable us to get to the bottom of this, hold China accountable, and defend us against any future CCP threats.

Mr. HIMES. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. BERA), a member of the Select Committee on the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Mr. BERA. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

This should be an easy vote because this is just about science. It is about understanding the origins of this virus

that created this pandemic that took at a minimum 7 million lives—probably many more than that. It is just about science. We are not debating the geography of where this virus originated. We know that. We are debating how this novel virus evolved. This is a brand-new virus, and that should go without question.

I hope this is a strong “yes” vote by both Democrats and Republicans.

I think about this as a doctor and a scientist, someone who has spent a lot of my time in Congress looking at global health security, looking at pandemic preparedness. I am proud to serve on the select committee that is looking at coronavirus and the impact of this pandemic. My colleague, another physician, Dr. WENSTRUP, is the chairman of that committee, and the ranking member is Dr. RAUL RUIZ.

Again, I think if we can take the politics out of this, we can actually understand what happened over these past 3 years, the impact it had not just on the United States but on the entire world.

We can work together as Democrats and Republicans and hopefully the global scientific community to prevent the next pandemic. That is what this is about.

□ 0930

I don't know if we will ever find those origins if the Chinese Communist Party doesn't work with us. It is in their interests as well because they have suffered greatly. The Chinese people have suffered greatly from this pandemic.

They ought to allow the best scientists in the world to go to ground zero, to the hot zone, to Wuhan, and try to understand how this virus evolved.

Maybe it was a wet market. Maybe it was a lab leak. It is important for us to understand what it was because that then will allow us to address and shore up the system.

If it was a lab leak, we ought to have the highest safety standards in the world if we are doing this kind of research. We ought to look at whether we should do gain-of-function research. That is a legitimate question. There is scientific debate about that, et cetera, but if it was a lab leak, we ought to understand that.

We ought to come together as a global community and make sure we have the highest standards. If it was a wet market, if this was a naturally occurring virus that came from an animal into a human, we ought to understand that, as well. We ought to put in the safety and precautions to make sure that doesn't happen in the future.

Let's take the politics out of it. Today, we have a chance as the United States Congress to take a big vote, Democrats and Republicans, to say: Let's try to figure out what happened.

It affected all of us, and we ought to do everything we can as the United States Congress, Democrats and Republicans, and as a global scientific

community to prevent this from happening again in our lifetime and, hopefully, ever again.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans, to vote “yes” on this bill. It will allow us to share information with the public because, again, this affected all of us. I hope we have a strong “yes” vote on the COVID origins bill.

Mr. TURNER. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. CRAWFORD).

Mr. CRAWFORD. Madam Speaker, this bill is the beginning of transparency Americans deserve regarding COVID's entry into our Nation, a virus that has killed more than a million of our loved ones here at home and millions more across the world.

Our colleagues on the Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic will piece together all the facts and share them with the public, including the role played by elements of our government and the media to try to discredit those who told the truth about COVID.

This bill is focused on safe disclosure of what our intelligence agencies have learned about the central role foreign actors had in the creation and spread of this deadly virus.

It is important that Americans and others across the globe learn about the Chinese Communist Party's coverup of COVID's origins at its Wuhan research facility, as well as the World Health Organization's subsequent role in suppressing this truth.

Until China and others who echo China's false narrative face accountability and consequences for that, we are just inviting the next coverup.

Mr. HIMES. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TURNER. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. KELLY).

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I rise today to encourage Members to support passage of S. 619, a bill that requires the Director of National Intelligence to declassify information related to the origin of COVID-19.

The need for transparency regarding the origin of this pandemic cannot be overstated, especially as the world continues to grapple with its effects.

I thank Chairman TURNER for his leadership on this issue, and I thank the Senate Intelligence Committee for their diligent work.

As you all know, the COVID-19 pandemic and the government's chaotic response have had a devastating impact on our Nation and the world. It has caused loss of life, disrupted our economy, and fundamentally changed our way of life.

We owe it to the American people to inform them where this virus originated and how. Republican Members charged with oversight have always been champions of transparency and accountability. By supporting this bill, we are showing the American people

that we take this responsibility seriously. Republicans are keeping their promise to do everything within our power to get the truth and hold those responsible accountable.

To date, the source of the virus remains unclear, and there are strong indications that it may have originated from a laboratory in Wuhan, China.

The American people deserve answers. They deserve to know the truth about the origin of this pandemic. Without transparency, the public will turn to malign actors for information, further undermining our citizens' trust in the government and its intelligence agencies.

As we know, trust is a vital component of any successful democracy. When citizens do not trust their government, it destabilizes society and strains the fabric that binds our communities together.

The intelligence community has a responsibility to provide the American people with accurate information that can help them make informed decisions. By declassifying the information on COVID-19, the DNI can help restore the public's trust in our intelligence community.

Madam Speaker, I urge support for passage of S. 619. It is our duty to the American people to do everything within our power to get to the truth, and this bill is an important step in that direction.

Mr. HIMES. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TURNER. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT).

Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia. Madam Speaker, like millions of people around the world, in 2020, I tested positive for COVID. I was fortunate. After several days in the hospital and 14 days on oxygen, I was able to recover. Many were not.

Americans and the rest of the world deserve to know exactly where this virus started and any details surrounding the origins of the virus that launched the globe into chaos.

If the CCP was not fully transparent during these times, people need to know that, as well. How long did they cover it up? How long did they know that this virus had been unleashed?

If we are going to defeat the Communist Chinese Party, our government has to be transparent about how malicious they have become. The U.S. and other freedom-loving Nations are going to have to join together to make sure that we expose their intent to the world.

I believe that we all have the right to know about the origins of COVID-19, and I urge my colleagues to support this resolution to require the Director of National Intelligence to declassify any of the information that we have on the origins of COVID and the CCP.

Mr. HIMES. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TURNER. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. STEWART).

Mr. STEWART. Madam Speaker, again, I thank the chairman and the minority leader for their support on this.

In April 2020, just months into the pandemic, we had a briefing from various agencies to the Intel Committee about the origins of the pandemic. At that point, one of the agencies said to us that they knew this did not come from the Wuhan lab, and many of us were angry at that.

We said to them, how could you possibly know that? The truth is, they didn't know that. The American people deserve to know the truth.

Throughout the pandemic, Dr. Anthony Fauci has consistently said anyone who would even propose this idea that it came from the lab or some other source that was manufactured in China was nothing but a conspiracy theorist. He belittled anyone who suggested that. They tried to silence anyone who suggested that. He advocated among his fellow scientists to do the same thing.

Again, the American people deserve to know the truth, and I would defy anyone to give me any possible explanation why they would oppose this bill.

This isn't like the movies—"You can't handle the truth." The American people, of course, can handle the truth. They deserve to know the truth.

This final thought: Even now, the NIH is still listing the Wuhan Institute of Virology for eligibility to receive our Federal tax dollars.

That makes no sense at all. It is absolute nonsense. We can't do that until, once again, we know the truth.

Madam Speaker, I encourage support for this bill.

Mr. HIMES. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TURNER. Madam Speaker, the issue of the origins of COVID are so important that our Speaker has appointed a select subcommittee on the origins of COVID. Our next speaker, Dr. WENSTRUP, is the chair of that subcommittee.

Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WENSTRUP).

Mr. WENSTRUP. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of S. 619, the COVID-19 Origin Act of 2023. The American people deserve answers on the origins of the COVID-19 virus, a novel coronavirus that sparked a pandemic and has killed nearly 7 million people worldwide to date.

The impact of the pandemic on the American people has been catastrophic. We lost loved ones. Everyone has been touched.

Our physicians, nurses, and healthcare workers were strained beyond capacity. We had to contend with lockdowns and school closures resulting in learning loss, as well as shutdowns and job loss, and depression and suicide that spiked after these measures.

Many Americans still suffer physically, mentally, and economically

from the impact of the virus and the measures taken during the pandemic.

This bill will provide some sunlight for the American people, scientists, and physicians. I am honored to be one of seven physicians on the Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, as Dr. BERA referenced earlier.

In order for us to be able to predict, prepare, protect, and prevent against a future pandemic, we need to know how and where this pandemic began.

There are sound reasons to conclude that this particular virus may have resulted from a lab leak in the Wuhan Institute of Virology.

In the fall of 2019, well before Americans were aware of a problem in Wuhan, four unusual things happened at the Wuhan lab. Multiple researchers became sick with COVID-19-like symptoms, according to a State Department fact sheet. The Wuhan institute deleted the sequences of viruses that they had in their library. They changed control of the lab from civilian to military—highly unusual—and had a contractor redo the ventilation system in the laboratory. Furthermore, we know the Wuhan Institute of Virology was conducting gain-of-function research on novel bat coronaviruses by creating chimeric viruses, combining two viruses together to test infectivity, and infecting mice with these viruses for study.

The Wuhan lab applied to receive U.S. grant funding in order to insert what is called the furin cleavage site into novel coronaviruses, the same unique genetic aspect of COVID-19 that made it more infectious to humans.

Last Congress, I was honored to lead the House Intelligence Committee Republicans in producing our second interim report on the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic. This Congress, I am fortunate to continue this work as the chairman of the Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, where we will work on a bipartisan basis to follow the facts, conduct a fair investigation, and seek to deliver the truth to the American people.

This bill we are voting on today to declassify information on the origins of the COVID-19 virus will provide much-needed transparency for Americans who have lost so much in this tragedy, but it is only a start.

I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in this endeavor.

Madam Speaker, I urge support of this legislation.

Mr. HIMES. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TURNER. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MURPHY).

Mr. MURPHY. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 619, a bill to require the Office of the Director of National Intelligence to declassify all information related to potential leaks between the Wuhan Institute of Virology and the origins of COVID-19.

We had red flags about COVID's origins from day one. If it looks like a

duck, swims like a duck, and quacks like a duck, it is probably a duck. Folks, this screams like a duck.

In January 2020, Dr. Fauci received emails that promulgated that COVID-19 looked engineered and not from the wild. Yet, 3 weeks later, to save his own skin, he commissioned a scientific paper that "debunked" the lab theory. He was academically and intellectually dishonest. Why? He did not want the American people to know the truth.

The truth is that Dr. Fauci and his institution funneled hundreds of thousands of dollars of taxpayer money to promote dangerous gain-of-function research at the Wuhan Institute of Virology without proper guardrails.

That is the key. The Wuhan lab was no more set up to deal with this deadly virus than my mother's kitchen.

We had people—thousands, millions of people—lose their lives, their livelihoods, and their loved ones.

If this contagion leaked from the lab, if that is the case, the world deserves to know. It is time to call out the duck in the room. Release the intelligence that we need to find out the truth.

We have been lied to by China. We have even been lied to by our own government leaders. We need the truth. We ask our colleagues to please pass this bill.

Mr. HIMES. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, we were doing pretty well there, but behind the discussion of ducks were some pretty aggressive accusations of lying of American Government officials, dishonesty, attributions of motives, which is really what I am and I think what we are all trying to avoid here.

□ 0945

I will say it again. As profoundly frustrating as it is, we just don't know. We are entitled to have theories. We are citizens, after all. We shouldn't be so certain in those theories that we are willing to impugn the character and motives of other Americans, especially if those Americans are in positions of responsibility that need to be trusted in the next pandemic. So I will leave that there.

I do want to characterize and substantiate my rather frustrating observation that we just don't know—with what the intelligence community believes is the latest assessment on the origins—again, I understand this is frustrating, but facts are important.

Here it is, and this is a publicly available document: Four intelligence community elements and the National Intelligence Council assess, with low confidence, that the virus was likely caused by natural exposure to animals infected with it.

One IC element assesses, with moderate confidence, that the first human infection most likely was the result of a laboratory-associated incident.

Then analysts at three IC elements remain unable to coalesce around either explanation.

That is a profoundly frustrating picture of organizations whose aggregate budget is tens of billions of dollars, who draw on all kinds of expertise, and yes, who are fallible, like any human institutions are. That is where they are and, sadly, that aggregates to, we just don't know.

We are entitled to speculate. We are entitled to have theories. I would just urge caution about impugning people's motives, impugning their character based on those theories which are necessarily rooted in uncertainty.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TURNER. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. MCCORMICK).

Mr. MCCORMICK. Madam Speaker, it is about time. It is good to see a bill actually shed some light on a disease process if we want to expose something, if we want to bring the truth. This should have been done a long time ago.

When we first started seeing this disease in the emergency department, I was there on the front lines seeing people with fevers for no reason, testing negative for flu, testing negative for strep, pneumonia, and urinary tract infections. We couldn't figure out why they were sick. We were sending them home, not really understanding what was wrong with them.

Then we had a hard time trying to figure out how to treat them. We went through a novel disease process, just like they did back in 1918 when we had the original flu pandemic where 26 million people died in about a year.

It should never come to a point where we become politically motivated. More to the point of why we have become so critical of people who should be trusted is when they have bias built into their argument to begin with, and that is what we are here to expose.

When we have transparency, when we have declassified information so we can actually make a good judgment based on public opinion when it is exposed to the truth, I think it will expose that people were politically motivated; that they are embarrassed by their choices, and that they made choices to politicize this, rather than get to the bottom of this.

We cannot stop a disease by misunderstanding where it came from. We cannot have an honest discussion and heal our Nation until we have accountability.

I think where the mistrust comes from is the fact that it was politicized to begin with. So I think it is fair criticism when you have emails that expose the fact that they were trying to spin it a certain way, rather than having an honest, scientific discussion. That is fair criticism, and people should be held accountable if we are going to get to the bottom of this.

As an ER doctor who served during the entire pandemic, since before I even knew what it was, watching peo-

ple die in front of me, learning lessons—and those are honest lessons, where doctors made decisions and in good faith made mistakes, but it was in good faith—and we want to expose people who made decisions out of bad faith.

Mr. HIMES. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TURNER. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PFLUGER).

Mr. PFLUGER. Madam Speaker, for nearly 3 years now, the truth about COVID-19 and its origins have been hidden from the American people. We are at a real crossroads here. There should not be a single partisan fight over this issue.

We are talking about the lives of so many people, not only in our country, but also throughout the rest of the world.

Unfortunately, Big Government bureaucrats like Anthony Fauci abused their positions of power to disguise and distort the facts and to further a tyrannical approach to our country.

Anyone who dared ask the question about the origins of COVID, or chose to make an independent healthcare decision for their own family, were silenced, censored, and ostracized as conspiracy theorists.

Lo and behold, we stand here today with so many of these truths that were previously called conspiracy theories turning out to be true; the most glaring example being that Fauci knew as early as March of 2020 that the coronavirus leaked from a lab in Wuhan, China.

He spent the next 3 years dodging, misleading, mischaracterizing the possibility, and even using American taxpayer dollars to pay for studies to discredit that very thing.

This is not just unfortunate, this is truly astonishing. We wonder why the American people have a lack of trust in our government; it is because of these kinds of things.

My constituents deserve to know the truth. Everyone that is here, their constituents deserve to know the truth.

Republicans delivered a Commitment to America that we would deliver accountability; that we would have a government that is accountable, and it starts with things like this.

We shouldn't fear government institutions. We should not fear the decisions that are made. But when you hide things, you mischaracterize things, and you mislead the public, we do.

That is part of our Commitment to America, to uncover these things and make accountable and transparent; to put things on the table and let people know the facts. That accountability is going to have to be for the lives that were lost, the livelihoods that were destroyed, and the years together that families were robbed of.

Pass this bill. Declassify this information, and let's get the truth.

Mr. TURNER. Madam Speaker, I have no more speakers. I am prepared

to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HIMES. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I will reiterate my support for this bill and my gratitude to the chairman and the Republican majority for moving it quickly.

This bill, fundamentally, is about something we haven't talked a lot about today, which is transparency. Transparency is a cornerstone of our democracy because without transparency, the American people can't make the decisions that they need to make responsibly as citizens of a democracy.

I am sorry that today we heard a little bit of accusations that the truth was hidden from the American people; that taxpayer funds were misused; that Dr. Fauci had a motive to cover himself; that there was government censorship. There is not one iota of evidence for any of that.

When we say those things without evidence, what we do is we reduce the American people's faith in their government and, eventually, when their faith in their government is reduced to nothing, we lose our democracy, or we see people breaking windows downstairs to get into the government's Chambers because it has been so discredited.

But I am going to set that aside right now because this is an important, bipartisan effort to bring transparency around something that is going to be pretty frustrating for the American people because no matter what is declassified, it won't be dispositive about the origins of the coronavirus.

This is a really important first step. I hope it will clear up some of the speculation, some of the rumors that are out there; and it is emblematic of something that the chairman and I care a lot about, which is, that unless there is a really good reason to keep something classified, the American people are responsible enough to have that information.

I thank again Chairman TURNER for his work on this issue, for his commitment to bipartisanship.

Madam Speaker, I urge support from the whole House for S. 619, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TURNER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to begin by thanking my ranking member. This bill comes to the House floor from the Senate with bipartisan support in the House, and it does so as a result of the leadership of the Ranking Member, JIM HIMES. I appreciate his commitment to both the declassifying of information and to the importance of this information concerning COVID-19, and for the fact that we are working in a bipartisan manner to do so.

This will be a very strong statement from this House today that we want to know the origins of COVID-19. The American public deserves to know the

answers, and that we are moving to declassify the information that we have available.

Madam Speaker, I ask for support of S. 619, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 199, the previous question is ordered on the bill.

The question is on the third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the yeas appeared to have it.

Mr. TURNER. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 419, nays 0, not voting 16, as follows:

[Roll No. 143]

YEAS—419

Adams	Castor (FL)	Fischbach
Aderholt	Chavez-DeRemer	Fitzgerald
Aguilar	Cherfilus	Fitzpatrick
Alford	McCormick	Fleischmann
Allen	Chu	Fletcher
Allred	Cicilline	Flood
Amodei	Ciscomani	Foster
Armstrong	Clark (MA)	Foushee
Arrington	Clarke (NY)	Fox
Auchincloss	Cline	Frankel, Lois
Babin	Cloud	Franklin, C.
Bacon	Clyburn	Scott
Baird	Clyde	Frost
Balderson	Cohen	Fry
Balint	Cole	Fulcher
Banks	Collins	Gaetz
Barr	Comer	Gallagher
Barragan	Cannolly	Garamendi
Bean (FL)	Correa	Garbarino
Beatty	Costa	Garcia (IL)
Bentz	Courtney	Garcia (TX)
Bera	Craig	Garcia, Mike
Bergman	Crane	Garcia, Robert
Bice	Crawford	Gimenez
Biggs	Crenshaw	Golden (ME)
Billakis	Crickett	Goldman (NY)
Bishop (GA)	Crow	Gomez
Bishop (NC)	Cuellar	Gonzales, Tony
Blumenauer	Curtis	Gonzalez,
Blunt Rochester	D'Esposito	Vicente
Boebert	Daids (KS)	Good (VA)
Bonamici	Davidson	Gooden (TX)
Bost	Davis (IL)	Gosar
Bowman	Davis (NC)	Gottheimer
Boyle (PA)	De La Cruz	Granger
Brecheen	Dean (PA)	Graves (LA)
Brown	DeGette	Graves (MO)
Brownley	DeLauro	Green (TN)
Buchanan	DelBene	Green, Al (TX)
Buck	Deluzio	Greene (GA)
Bucshon	DeSaulnier	Griffith
Budzinski	DesJarlais	Grijalva
Burchett	Diaz-Balart	Grothman
Burgess	Dingell	Guest
Burlison	Doggett	Guthrie
Bush	Donalds	Hageman
Calvert	Duarte	Harder (CA)
Cammack	Duncan	Harris
Caraveo	Dunn (FL)	Harshbarger
Carbajal	Ellzey	Hayes
Cárdenas	Emmer	Hern
Carey	Escobar	Higgins (LA)
Carl	Eshoo	Higgins (NY)
Carson	Espallat	Hill
Carter (GA)	Estes	Himes
Carter (LA)	Evans	Hinson
Carter (TX)	Ezell	Horsford
Cartwright	Fallon	Houchin
Casar	Feenstra	Houlahan
Case	Ferguson	Hoyer
Casten	Finstad	Hoyle (OR)

Hudson	McGovern	Schiff
Huffman	Meeks	Schneider
Huizenga	Menendez	Scholten
Hunt	Meuser	Schweikert
Issa	Mfume	Scott (VA)
Ivey	Miller (IL)	Scott, Austin
Jackson (IL)	Miller (OH)	Scott, David
Jackson (NC)	Miller (WV)	Self
Jackson (TX)	Mills	Sessions
Jackson Lee	Molinaro	Sewell
Jacobs	Moolenaar	Sherman
James	Mooney	Sherrill
Jayapal	Moore (AL)	Simpson
Jeffries	Moore (UT)	Slotkin
Johnson (GA)	Moore (WI)	Smith (MO)
Johnson (LA)	Moran	Smith (NE)
Johnson (OH)	Morelle	Smith (NJ)
Johnson (SD)	Moskowitz	Smith (WA)
Jordan	Moulton	Smucker
Joyce (OH)	Mrvan	Sorensen
Joyce (PA)	Mullin	Soto
Kamlager-Dove	Murphy	Spanberger
Kaptur	Nadler	Stansbury
Kean (NJ)	Napolitano	Stanton
Keating	Neal	Staubert
Kelly (IL)	Neguse	Steel
Kelly (MS)	Nehls	Stefanik
Kelly (PA)	Newhouse	Steil
Khanna	Nickel	Stevens
Kiggans (VA)	Norcross	Stewart
Kildee	Norman	Strickland
Kiley	Nunn (IA)	Strong
Kilmer	Obermole	Swalwell
Kim (CA)	Ocasio-Cortez	Sykes
Kim (NJ)	Ogles	Takano
Krishnamoorthi	Omar	Tenney
Kuster	Owens	Thanedar
Kustoff	Pallone	Thompson (CA)
LaHood	Palmer	Thompson (MS)
LaLota	Panetta	Thompson (PA)
LaMalfa	Pappas	Tiffany
Lamborn	Pascarell	Titus
Landman	Payne	Tlaib
Langworthy	Pelosi	Tokuda
Larsen (WA)	Peltola	Tonko
Larson (CT)	Pence	Torres (CA)
Latta	Perez	Torres (NY)
LaTurner	Perry	Trahan
Lawler	Peters	Trone
Lee (CA)	Pettersen	Turner
Lee (FL)	Pfizer	Underwood
Lee (NV)	Pingree	Valadao
Lee (PA)	Pocan	Van Dine
Lesko	Porter	Van Orden
Letlow	Posey	Vargas
Levin	Pressley	Vasquez
Lofgren	Quigley	Veasey
Loudermilk	Ramirez	Velazquez
Lucas	Raskin	Wagner
Luetkemeyer	Reschenthaler	Walberg
Luna	Rodgers (WA)	Waltz
Luttrell	Rogers (AL)	Wasserman
Lynch	Rogers (KY)	Schultz
Mace	Rose	Waters
Magaziner	Rosendale	Watson Coleman
Malliotakis	Ross	Weber (TX)
Mann	Rouzer	Webster (FL)
Manning	Roy	Wenstrup
Massie	Ruiz	Westerman
Mast	Ruppersberger	Wexton
Matsui	Rutherford	Wild
McBath	Ryan	Williams (GA)
McCarthy	Salazar	Williams (NY)
McCaul	Salinas	Williams (TX)
McClain	Sánchez	Wilson (FL)
McClellan	Santos	Wilson (SC)
McClintock	Sarbanes	Wittman
McCollum	Scalise	Womack
McCormick	Scanlon	Yakym
McGarvey	Schakowsky	Zinke

NOT VOTING—16

Beyer	Lieu	Spartz
Castro (TX)	McHenry	Steube
Cleaver	Meng	Timmons
Edwards	Miller-Meeks	Van Drew
Gallego	Phillips	
Leger Fernandez	Schrier	

□ 1025

Messrs. MCCARTHY, TAKANO, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and Mrs. TORRES of California changed their vote from “nay” to “yea.”

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. EDWARDS. Madam Speaker, due to a district emergency, I was unavoidably detained from voting today. Had I been present, I would have voted “yea” on rollcall No. 143.

Mr. MCHENRY. Madam Speaker, due to an unforeseen scheduling conflict, I was unable to vote on the passage of S. 619. Had I been present, I would have voted “yea” on rollcall No. 143.

Ms. SCHRIER. Madam Speaker, due to illness, I was unable to be present today. Had I been present, I would have voted “yea” on rollcall No. 143.

Mr. TIMMONS. Madam Speaker, I was in my congressional district today during votes. Had I been present, I would have voted “yea” on rollcall No. 143.

HONORING FOUR WOMEN WHO WENT THE EXTRA MILE

(Mr. KELLY of Mississippi asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the incredible achievement and sacrifice of four remarkable women. Carmen Bird, Shay Hartley, Kristen Gregor, and Mary Schramko completed the Norwegian Foot March on March 4, 2023. They did so in honor of Hunter Ritter, a veteran who tragically committed suicide.

These four women have shown remarkable courage, determination, and selflessness in carrying out this grueling march.

They each carried \$500 worth of quarters, which equates to 25 pounds of weight, to donate to Biloxi High School Junior ROTC. In doing so, they also supported our veterans' 22 suicides a day movement as supporters.

Their physical and emotional sacrifices represent the struggles that our veterans face every day. The march was first held in 1915 as a test of endurance for soldiers in the Norwegian Army.

Carmen, Shay, Kristen, and Mary completed this march and demonstrated their solidarity with the brave men and women who serve our country. They have shown that they are willing to go the extra mile—or this case, for over 18 miles—to support those who have given so much in defense of our freedom.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that we please recognize the epidemic that is causing suicides in our veterans and other young people, and let's please do something to fix it.

OREGON FIGHTS FOR THE TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY

(Ms. SALINAS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SALINAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to send an unequivocal, simple